Response to Toxic Stress:
Supporting resilience in young children and their caregivers to promote long-term health and improved learning outcomes

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Introductions

Nicole Jacobson
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Response to Toxic Stress:
Supporting resilience in young children and their caregivers to promote long-term health and improved learning outcomes
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- First 4 Levels: *Deficit Needs*
  - Basic needs or Physiological needs
  - Love and Belonging
  - Esteem
- Beyond: *Metamotivation*
  - Cognitive
  - Aesthetic
  - Need for Self-actualization

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Maslow
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):
Hurdles to Student Learning and Long-term Health

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html

CDC-Kaiser Permanente Study, 1995-1997

- 17,337 participants completed surveys

- Major Findings:
  - ACEs are common across all populations.
    - Almost 2/3 of study participants reported $\geq 1$ ACE.
    - More than 1/5 participants reported $\geq 3$ ACEs.
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Hurdles to Student Learning and Long-term Health

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html

CDC-Kaiser Permanente Study, 1995-1997
• 17,337 participants completed surveys

• Major Findings:
  • Some populations are more vulnerable to experiencing ACEs
  • Social and economic conditions in which they live, learn, work and play.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Hurdles to Student Learning and Long-term Health

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html

CDC-Kaiser Permanente Study, 1995-1997
• 17,337 participants completed surveys

• Major Findings:
  • ACE score: the total sum of the different categories of ACEs reported by participants.
  • Graded dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes.
    • I.e., as the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for negative outcomes.
Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Pediatrician, Surgeon General of CA


Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Pediatrician, California Surgeon General

Screenshot: [https://www.edutopia.org/article/trauma-written-our-bodies-educators-can-help](https://www.edutopia.org/article/trauma-written-our-bodies-educators-can-help)
Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Pediatrician, Surgeon General of CA


The Impact of Trauma on Learning and Behavior

The more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the more learning and behavioral problems reported, according to Dr. Nadine Burke Harris.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children With Learning or Behavior Problems</th>
<th>0 ACEs</th>
<th>1-3 ACEs</th>
<th>4+ ACEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 ACES</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burke, Heldman, Scott, Weems, & Carrion, 2017

Last Month’s Email Box:

Harvard, Center on the Developing Child: “Health and Learning are Deeply Interconnected in the Body”

**Screenshot:** https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-10-WP15MiniBrief_FINAL.pdf

1. The brain and all other systems in the body interact with each other as they adapt to the environment.

   The conditions we create and the experiences we provide for young children affect not just the developing brain, but also other systems in the body, including immune responses and metabolic regulation. Working like a team of skilled athletes, these systems rely on and react to information from the environment and from each other. Together, they perform the functions that are essential for lifelong well-being.

   **Implications:** Because all biological systems in the body are connected, supporting families with young children and strengthening responsive relationships not only build a foundation for social-emotional development, school readiness, and future learning; they also strengthen the building blocks for a lifetime of physical and mental health.

2. Experiences during the prenatal period and first 2-3 years after birth affect lifelong health at least as much as they affect school achievement.

   Developmental timing is critical. Science tells us that experiences and exposures during pregnancy and the first few years after birth affect developing biological systems in many ways that are difficult to change later. For example, if a woman experiences excessive stress, poor nutrition, or toxic environmental exposures during pregnancy, it can affect how organs, stress response, and metabolic systems develop, with long-lasting impacts into adulthood, such as increased risk for heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and mental health conditions.

   **Implications:** Policies and programs that reduce stress, prevent toxic exposures, and provide support for pregnant mothers and families with infants and toddlers will result in better health outcomes across the lifespan and save billions in health care costs. Taken another way, if we delay early investments until later in the preschool period, we will miss a critical opportunity to build a stronger foundation for a healthier and more productive adult population.
Harvard, Center on the Developing Child: “Health and Learning are Deeply Interconnected in the Body”

Screenshot: https://46y5eh11f8gw3ve3ytpwxt9ri-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-10_-WP1SMiniBrief_FINAL.pdf

Harvard, Center on the Developing Child: “Health and Learning are Deeply Interconnected in the Body”

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities:
“Balancing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) With HOPE”

Impact of Positive parental relationships & experiences on childhood resilience:
- Parents discussed things that mattered with their children.
- Parents participated in child's activities & knew child's friends
- Parents managed their own parenting stress.

Summary
- “…protective factors related to children’s relationships and experiences with their parents and communities are strongly associated with resilience in children; resilient children – even those who have suffered four or more adverse experiences – have better functional (school) and health outcomes.”
- “These negative effects (emotional, mental, and behavioral) hold up across all income and race/ethnicity groups: At the same time, positive relationships and environment buffer the impact of ACEs across all levels of household income.”
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities:
“Balancing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) With HOPE”
https://www.alliance1.org/web/resources/pubs/balancing-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-hope.aspx?gclid=Cj0KCQjwuL_8BRCXARhsAGiCS1BiCKfItp22AeK6y6sGkWkollcaQwlCEn9XSeitMvHBpQUXFRzifi0uAig_EALw_wcB

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Positive Parenting Practices:

- Catch the child being good.
- Respond to child’s crying.
- Play or read to child.
- Seek support with parenting.
- Support the child’s language development.
  - “Give child words.”
- Seldom/never spank.
- Seldom/never fight in front of child.
10 Tips for Building Resilience in Children and Teens

1. Help the child to connect with peers.
   • Empathy, listening to others
2. Engage child in service/helping others.
3. Keep a daily routine.
4. Build unstructured time during school day for the child to explore creativity.
5. Teach the child self-care skills
   • nutrition, exercise, adequate sleep
**10 Tips for Building Resilience in Children and Teens**

6. Help child to set attainable goals.
   - Support progress toward goals.
7. Help child nurture a positive self-view.
   - Help child recall past successes over challenges.
9. Help child recognize how they have learned/developed in times of challenge.
10. Help the child accept change.

**Building Resilience in Preschool Children**

- Watch for signs of fear, sadness
  - clingy, regressive behaviors, irritable
- Use play/art/games to help them express their feelings
- Use family time to support closeness
  - Increase family time in times of stress/change
  - E.g., read, play games, holding child close
**American Psychological Association:**
“Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers”
https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience-guide-parents

**Building Resilience in Elementary School Children**
- Ensure child has a “safe place”.
- Talk with child honestly and with reassurance of action plans to keep them safe.
- Listen to child’s concerns/fears.
- Limit exposure to news media that is frightening.
  - Check their understanding of what they view/overhear.
- Be aware of impact of compounded stressors on child’s capacity.
  - Respond with reassurance

**Building Resilience in Middle School Children**
- Children look to teachers, peers, parents for safe support.
- Reinforce empathy.
- Help frame perspective, esp during shifting social groups.
- Adults can provide models of self talk to negotiate feelings during extraordinary stress.
  - Share coping strategies with child.
  - Realize that child may need different strategies.
American Psychological Association: “Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers”
https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience-guide-parents

Building Resilience in High Schoolers
• Teens can feel fear/uncertainly keenly.
  • Typical teen stressors
  • World events
    • Take news breaks, when needed.
• Emotions may be volatile.
• Connections may be difficult.
• Talk with teens, even then they appear uninterested in talking.
• Answer teen’s questions honestly, with reassurance.
  • Ask their opinion and LISTEN.

American Psychological Association: “Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers”
https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience-guide-parents

Building Resilience in High Schoolers
• Help teen create their own safe place.
• May prefer time with peers.
• Support with family time.
• Encourage journal writing or art to express emotions.
• Be understanding of fluctuating emotions (due to hormonal levels) yet firm with angry or sullen behavior.
• Reassure teen of your support and of their capability.
Supporting Parents Supporting Children

Vroom: Everyone has what it takes to be a Brain Builder!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB1Uo9nlVU&t=3s
Thank you

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